

GLOSSARY

INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION

The glossary below is designed not only to give the meanings of acronyms but also to provide a glossary of commonly used terms and a short explanation of their meanings. This is particularly important for translators and interpreters who are assisting in the implementation of these guidelines and other documents in languages other than English.

The terms that follow are recommended for use, even where they replace common usage in another language. In Russian, for example, when outreach first started among IDUs, there was no term for IDU in common usage but narcologists (drug treatment doctors) referred to IDUs with a term that in English would be “drug addict”. Such a term was inaccurate (IDUs might or might not be addicted, and people dependent on or addicted to drugs might or might not be injectors). It also had negative connotations. This was replaced by a term that literally means, “injecting drug user”, even though this term sounds strange to Russians. Over several years, the new accurate term gradually became more commonly used.

Sometimes the problems can go even deeper. In Bahasa, Indonesia, for example, there was no word for “drugs” until recently. Specific drugs had names but drug issues in general were rarely discussed so there were no terms developed for the collective noun “drugs”. In 2001–2002, much work was done by a collaborative group of HIV/AIDS and drugs experts in Indonesia to develop consensus on Indonesian terms, which are now used for drugs and IDUs, etc.

In addition, many languages have a word for prostitute that has negative aspects. To avoid these aspects in English, the term “sex worker” was developed. It can be difficult to translate “sex worker” but translators and interpreters should strive to do so.

Translators and interpreters should discuss the terms below (if possible) with people who have sufficient knowledge of the concepts to answer any questions about meanings, alternative wording, etc.

Please note that the explanations are given to enhance the understanding and use of terminology use in this guide. They are not official WHO definitions and should not be referred to as such.

Abstinence (from a psychoactive substance)

Refraining from the use of substances, whether as a matter of principle or for other reasons.

AIDS

AIDS stands for: Acquired—not inherited; Immuno—relating to the body's immune system, which provides protection from disease-causing germs; Deficiency—lack of immune response to germs; Syndrome—a number of signs and symptoms indicating a particular disease or condition.

Buprenorphine

A drug used as a substitute to assist opioid (for example, heroin) users to stabilize their drug use and to move from injecting and other hazardous methods of taking drugs to (usually) oral forms of the drug. The drug is provided under supervised conditions as part of an intervention that may also involve counselling, primary health care, HIV treatment and other services. In some south Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan, the injectable form of this drug is also widely used by many IDUs as the primary drug of choice.

Counselling

A process of interpersonal communication by which a person with a need or problem is helped to understand his or her situation in order to determine and use viable solutions to meet the need or problem.

Culture

Is broadly defined to include the customs and practices of a group of people. Diversity in cultures reflects differences in race, ethnicity, language, and nationality, and in shared values, norms, traditions, and customs. Street children may feel a part of more than one culture, e.g. that of their parents and several youth cultures (represented by the groups with whom they share common interests, beliefs and activities).

Dependence (on substances)

Users who are dependent on substances often have poor control over the intake of substances and continue to use them despite significant substance-related problems. Dependent users may develop a tolerance for certain substances, and may experience withdrawal symptoms if they do not use those substances for a long period.

Detoxification

The care provided to a dependent person during the period of reduction or stoppage of a dependence-producing substance with the aim of withdrawing the substance safely and effectively. A substance user might experience a difficult period of transition when he or she stops using a substance or reduces the amount of substance use after prolonged or excessive use.

Dose

The amount of a substance that a person takes in a defined period.

Drug

In medicine, the term refers to any substance with the potential to prevent or cure a disease or the potential to enhance physical or mental well-being. In pharmacology, the term “drug” refers to any chemical agent that alters the biochemical or physiological processes of body tissues or organisms. In common usage, the term often refers to illicit drugs, frequently used for non-medical (e.g. recreational) reasons.

Drug substitution treatment

The use of drugs such as buprenorphine and methadone to assist opioid (for example, heroin) users to stabilize their drug use and to move from injecting and other hazardous methods of taking drugs to (usually) oral forms of the drug. The substitute drug is provided under supervised conditions as part of an intervention that may also involve counselling, primary health care, HIV treatment and other services.

Gender

Widely shared ideas and expectations (norms) about women (girls) and men (boys). These include typical feminine and masculine characteristics, abilities, and expectations about how women and men should behave in various situations.

Harmful use

A pattern of substance use that causes damage to physical or mental health including injuries from accidents and violence, infections from bloodborne viruses (such as HIV, hepatitis B and C), and medical conditions such as abscesses and overdose. Injecting drugs is particularly dangerous because of the risk of hepatitis, HIV and other infections from contaminated needles and syringes. Smoking substances can result in disorders of the respiratory system and burns. Some substances such as leaded petrol, benzene and coca paste can cause health damage even if they are taken in small amounts.

HIV

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the immune system and gradually destroys it. The body cannot defend itself against infections and this results in the condition known as AIDS.

IDUs (injecting drug users)

People who take drugs by injection. In these materials, a wide definition of IDUs is used to cover people who have injected experimentally or continue to inject occasionally up to and including heavily dependent drug users who may inject several times each day. IDUs may inject legal or illegal drugs, stimulants (such as amfetamines and cocaine), depressants (such as heroin and benzodiazepines) or other drugs such as steroids. They may inject intramuscularly (into the muscle) or intravenously (into the vein).

Intoxication

The state of being under the influence of one or more substances. There is a change in the person's wakefulness, alertness, thinking, perceptions, decision-making, emotional control or behaviour. The specific manifestations depend on the nature of the substance taken.

Intervention

In these materials, an intervention is defined as an action or activity that helps in the prevention, modification, or treatment of problems related to substance use and other health problems.

Lapse

An isolated instance of substance use after a period of non-use. A lapse does not necessarily lead to a relapse.

Life skills

Abilities that enable individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. They include decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, and empathy, coping with emotions and stress.

Methadone

A drug used as a substitute to assist opioid (for example, heroin) users to stabilize their drug use and to move from injecting and other hazardous methods of taking drugs to (usually) oral forms of the drug. The drug is provided under supervised conditions as part of an intervention that may also involve counselling, primary health care, HIV treatment and other services.

NSP needle and syringe programme

An intervention in which needles, syringes, other injecting equipment (such as alcohol swabs to clean injecting sites, and water with which to mix powdered drugs) are provided to IDUs through outreach, drop-incentres, clinics or shop-fronts, mobile units such as vans and buses and/or vending machines. Most NSPs include a retrieval service for used syringes. In some programmes, IDUs must provide used syringes before they can receive new syringes: these are called NSEPs: needle and syringe exchange programmes.

Overdose

Deliberate or accidental consumption of a much larger dose than that habitually used by the individual. It leads to acute adverse physical or mental effects, which might have short- or long-lasting consequences. Overdose can lead to death. The amount of a substance that can cause death varies with the individual and the circumstances.

Peer educators

Current or ex-IDUs or drug users or people close to the drug-using community who are trained to carry out informal or organized educational activities on a range of health-related topics with IDUs (in small-groups or individually).

Peer group

People who are similar to “oneself”. The peer group for an IDU is usually other IDUs of similar age living in the same neighbourhood. Each peer group has its own unwritten terms and vocabularies, and rules about the ways substances are used, about behaviour that is acceptable and unacceptable. Usual accepted behaviours are known as “norms”.

Programmes

Specific events or series of planned activities that are initiated with the aim of benefiting IDUs in some way.

Public security/police/narcotics control/interior

Ministries and departments with a similar role have different names in different countries. When this term is used, it means those personnel whose task it is to enforce a society’s laws, particularly laws related to drug use and sex work.

Relapse

A return to drinking or other substance use after a period of abstinence beyond the period of detoxification. It is often accompanied by a return to the previous level of substance use and dependence.

Services

The functions of the various service sectors, which entail more continuous assistance, opportunities, and benefits to IDUs than programmes. For example, health services (medical examination, emergency care, and immunizations) and education services.

Sex worker

Someone who exchanges sex for money, drugs, shelter or some other commodity. “Sex worker” is normally used to denote a person who sells sex for money. Sex workers can be male, female or transgender.

Street children

Street children may be literally living on the streets, either abandoned by their families or with no family members left alive; separated from their families and moving from friend to friend or living in shelters, such as abandoned buildings, hostels and refuges; in contact with their families, but spending most days and some nights on the street because of poverty, overcrowding, or sexual or physical abuse at home; in institutionalized care, having come from a situation of homelessness, and at risk of returning to a homeless existence.

Substance

Any product that affects the way people feel, think, see, taste, smell, hear or behave (psychoactive substance). A substance can be a medicine, such as morphine, or it can be an industrial product, such as glue. Some substances are legal, such as approved medicines and cigarettes, and others are illegal, as with heroin and cocaine.

Sustainability

The capacity of an organization to take the initiative for assuming responsibility for its own development and carry out the processes needed to make the organization depend solely on its own “strengths and resources”.

Tolerance

A decreased response to a substance dose. The same amount of the substance no longer produces the same effect. Dependent users may develop a tolerance to the substance, and their bodies may adjust to the substance.

Withdrawal

The problems a person experiences in adjusting to the stoppage or reduction in the amount of use of a substance after a period of prolonged or excessive use. These problems can include depression, tremor, sweating, muscle aches and twitches. Different substances have specific manifestations.